



Attorney General Jon Bruning

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Scam Alert – AG Bruning Says Watch Out for Mystery Shopper Check Scam

**Note: A sound bite on this topic will be available shortly at: <http://www.ago.ne.gov>**

(Lincoln, Neb.) Attorney General Jon Bruning wants to warn Nebraskans about a fraudulent check scam showing up in the state that's tied to alleged secret shopper opportunities.

Here's how the scam works:

- A consumer is asked to participate in a work-at-home or secret shopper opportunity. The offer can come via mail or e-mail.
- The person is sent a check for training. The check appears to come from a Nebraska bank.
- The consumer is asked to cash the check and wire money back to the business.
- A new twist - The checks have a phone number on them so the bank can call and get authorization. If a bank calls the number, the person who answers the phone confirms the check, date and amount.
- The check is phony and the consumer and bank are out anywhere from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

The State Patrol was alerted to the scam by a Nebraska bank. Three hundred people from around the U.S. have cashed or tried to cash counterfeit checks that appear to be issued from a few area banks, according to the State Patrol. The checks did not come from Nebraska banks and are fraudulent.

"This promise of easy money is leaving some consumers with an empty bank account," said Bruning. "Remember, if an opportunity sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

By taking a few steps consumers can protect themselves from check fraud:

- If you receive a cashier's check in the mail along with an offer to become a mystery shopper, don't cash it.
- Never give personal information to someone you don't know unless you initiate contact.
- Don't pay to become a mystery shopper. Becoming a legitimate mystery shopper for a legitimate company doesn't cost anything.
- Always be skeptical when you are asked to wire cash.
- Research the business contacting you and call to make sure that business is legitimate.
- Check Fakechecks.org to learn about the latest tactics scammers are using.
- Report suspected check fraud by calling the U.S. Postal Service at 1-800-372-8347 or contact the Attorney General's Office by calling our Consumer hotline at 1-800-727-6432 or e-mailing us from our Web site at [www.ago.ne.gov](http://www.ago.ne.gov).

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